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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON VP CHENEY'S REMARKS AT THE
DAVOS CONFERENCE AND STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers, January 26, highlights the signing of the second implementation stage of the Arab natural gas pipeline. Another lead story focuses on the prisoner exchange deal that was reached between Hizbollah and Israel. Lead stories continue to highlight developments in Iraq.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Cheney's remarks: more disappointment"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (01/25) editorializes: "Shortly after President Bush's state of the union address, where he avoided talking about peace in the Middle East, came Vice President Cheney's remarks in Davos, raising questions about the future of peace and stability in the region and the world.. Once again, the Vice President addressed the Palestinian and Israeli leadership on the basis of double standards. We do not differ with him that 'terrorism' harms the Palestinian people's cause, nor with his call for establishing a genuine Palestinian democracy, but to turn a blind eye to Israel's state terrorism remains as one of the elements of contention with the U.S. administration.. We will not go into the reasons that make U.S. officials deal nicely with Israel, particularly during the presidential elections season. But we do like to remind everyone that most of the hatred for the United States stems from the U.S. going along with Israel in its aggression against the Palestinian people and the U.S. denial of Arab rights.. Mr. Cheney's gentle demand that the Israeli prime minister ease the suffering of the Palestinian people and not do anything that would jeopardize the two-state solution in the future means nothing to Israel.. It is our right to feel sorry and disappointed with the continuation of the double standards and the bias in favor of Israel.. We had hoped that the U.S. administration would realize that the only way to put an end to violence and to give security and stability a chance is to impose peace on the basis of justice, a peace that ends occupation."

-- "Cheney who was silent forever"

Daily columnist Khaled Mahadin writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/25): "The same tense language used by President George Bush in his state of the union address was used by his Vice President Dick Cheney before the Davos summit: a language that does not speak of values and principles, nor does it call for compassion and a humane society, but rather threatens with the gun and the missile.. He attacked the Palestinian leadership because it did not join the Sharon leadership in its terrorist war against the Palestinian people, and failed to mention Israel's terrorism. What he, and all the U.S. administration before him, said about the Palestinians, people and leadership, is enough to show that Washington seeks to exterminate the Palestinians completely as the only solution to the Israeli-Israeli conflict. Washington and London did not ask the Israeli entity to abide by international legitimacy, nor to stop the terrorist war against the Palestinians, and nor did they talk about the entity's nuclear and biological arsenal. This policy of the United States against Arabs and Muslims and their causes contributes greatly to changing the standoff between the Arab nation and its enemies from a confrontation to a holy confrontation."

-- "Bush's state of the union address"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai

(01/25): "President Bush's state of the union address was an electioneering statement. The President pretended that his war on terrorism has succeeded, although continued exhaustion of blood and money in Afghanistan and Iraq show otherwise.. The greatest failure of the U.S. administration's policy is clearly the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to which the President did not make a single reference in his address.. The Bush administration's war practices may have removed a regime that would not go along with the United States, but they also brought America many new enemies, isolated it from its Europeans allies, and turned American into an outlaw country. If it is true that the Middle East is safer without Saddam, then it is also true that the whole world is safer without Bush."

HALE